precedent nor price was to be allowed to hinder the production of food for the people.

Exceptional measures needed

There was no time to lose for the increase of our home food supplies was not something which could be easily or rapidly achieved.

The harvest of 1916 had been poor; cereal crops small, potatoes few and diseased. If food was scarce, labour, owing to injudicious recruiting, was scarcer. There was a shortage of fertilisers, feeding-stuffs and tractors. The land had been badly let down in labour and manure at a time when its help was needed more than ever. The prospect for 1917 was therefore worse than for 1916. Only exceptional measures could hold out a prospect of an increased food production, particularly as the shipping shortage and restriction of imports handicapped the supply of feeding-stuffs for animals and fertilisers for the soil.

Food Production Department

An essential preliminary was to create an instrument suitable for carrying out our policy, and on 1st January, 1917, the Board of Agriculture established a Food Production Department, under the direction of Sir T. H. Middleton, to organise the expansion of tillage. The next step was to acquire appropriate powers, and on 10th January, 1917, a Regulation was issued by Order in Council, which gave the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (and, in Scotland, the Board of Agriculture, Scotland) power to make

setup

Orders bearing on the better cultivation of agricultural land. The Regulation empowered the Board to take over any land which they considered was being inadequately cultivated, to commandeer any implements or farm stock required for food production, regulate the use of land and order the ploughing-up of grass-land, dispossess farmers that were not